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The Magazine For Collectors

# Hobbies

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# Mechanical Electrical and Scientific Antiques

Conducted by F. H. GRIFFITH

## The U. S. Bank

By F. H. GRIFFITH

A mechanical bank with a completely unknown background is our choice as No. 60 in the numerical classification of the mechanical banks. This bank is the U. S. Bank and, to the best of the writer's knowledge, nothing is known as to the designer of the bank, the possible patentee, the manufacturer, or the actual date or period

in which it was made. The writer knows of no catalogs that picture or describe the bank and so far no patent papers have been found. There are no markings on the bank whatsoever and unfortunately no details of the construction, paint, or operation are indicative of any particular concern or individual who made mechanical banks.

The U. S. Bank pictured was obtained by the writer from the collection of the late Dr. Arthur E. Corby. It is in excellent all around condition and an exceptionally fine specimen. The bank is a very well made piece with unusually decorative castings, and quite ornate and Victorian. It is a very large and imposing bank and quite a number of parts are involved in the assembly and makeup of the fine building it represents. It is reasonable to assume that the bank was made in the 1885 to 1890 period. This can be ascertained by the appearance of the building and the uniform worn by the policeman.

The bank was obviously made by the same concern that manufactured the New Bank. This is of no help, however, as no more is known about the New Bank than the bank under discussion. The New Bank is a smaller but ornate type building and the same type policeman was used as a guard in the entrance way.

The operation of the U. S. Bank is rather simple. A coin slot is located over the head of the policeman, however, this is blocked from the inside so that no coins may be inserted until the mechanism is operated. The porcelain knob extending up from the roof is the operating lever, and when this is depressed a slot inside the bank lines up with the coin slot so that it is usable for the admittance of coins. At the same time the face of a dog appears in the round section of the right hand window and the face of a colored boy appears in the round section of the left hand window. Upon releasing the lever the faces disappear and the coin slot is again blocked against usage. The bank is pictured with the porcelain knob held in the depressed position so that the faces of the boy, and dog can be seen.

The bank is painted in a very decorative way with bright colors. The front of the building is green with the various windows outlined in red and white, and the doorway is red. The lettering 'U. S.' is painted red with white stripes. The sides of the building are a very dark blue with the diamond grated windows painted green with red and white outlining. The cup-shaped part on top of the building is dark blue, the dome below this is



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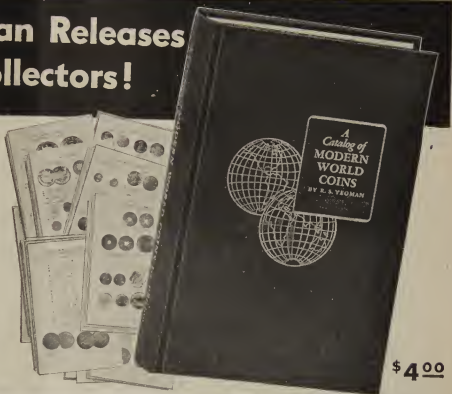
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# Hobbies

The Magazine For Collectors



POLITICAL ITEMS OF LINCOLN'S TIME  
(See page 26)

# HOBBIES

## The Magazine For Collectors

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FEBRUARY, 1958 Vol. 62, No. 12

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Political items of Lincoln's time from the Joseph G. Brown collection.

only a hobbyist can enjoy.

The cover illustration shows some other types of Lincoln campaign items, one of the scarcest being the tin badge in the form of a shield with the beardless bust of Lincoln facing left. Some manufacturers started a new form of political item with the issuance of ferrotype portraits of the candidates inserted in a brass frame struck from dies. The silk beardless Lincoln badge illus-

trated on the cover is from a Brady photograph engraved by J. C. Buttre. This photograph was taken when Lincoln made his famous Cooper Union speech. Although this picture was widely distributed during the 1860 campaign on paper, only a few of these silk badges were known to be made.

The "Rail Splitter of the West" became the party splitter of the 1860 campaign. The Democratic party split

over the slavery question, one faction nominated Stephen A. Douglas (2) who believed that the people of the new territories should decide as to whether or not they would have slavery, while the other faction representing the Southern pro-slavery views nominated John C. Breckinridge (3). A fourth party known as the Constitutional Union party ignoring the slavery question nominated John Bell (4).

# The Political Items of Lincoln's Time

By JOSEPH G. BROWN

## SEE COVER

The cover illustration shows a few specimens from the collection of Joseph G. Brown, Milwaukee, Wis. Brown, who is just 25, has one of the finest private collections of its kind.

With the celebration of Lincoln's birthday this month let us look back into our history and visualize what the 1860 and 1864 campaigns were like. To most Americans these past political campaigns represent only pages in our history books. To myself and fellow collectors of political Americana these campaigns approach reality through the hobby of collecting political items.

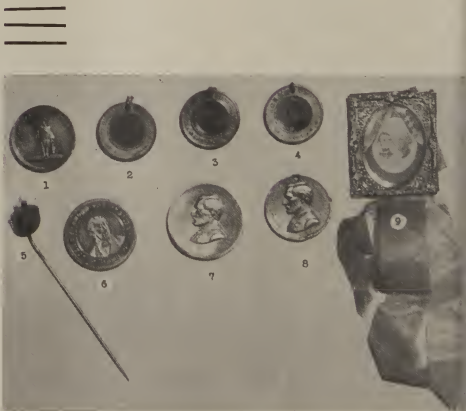
The year 1860 found our nation on the verge of civil war. During the administration of Buchanan the anti-slavery feeling grew, culminating in the nomination of Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War. The political candidates without the aid of television, radio or even sufficient newspaper space had to rely on direct contact with the voters oratorically and with campaign items. Luckily for us political item collectors, celluloid was unknown at the time resulting in the minting and issuance of beautifully engraved medals of silver, brass, copper, lead, and white metal. Many of these medals were holed so as to be tied to the lapel while others were pocket pieces. Approximately seventy medals were issued for Lincoln compared to fifty for his three opponents. Some medals refer to Lincoln's early struggle in life calling him the "Great Rail Splitter of the West" and "The Rail Splitter of 1830," while others refer to him as "The Peoples Choice 1860" and "Honest Old Abe." The medal (1) worn by the Hartford Wide-a-Wakes shows one member of this Lincoln marching organization in full uniform carrying a lantern. The small lapel torch light (5) is believed to be part of this organization's insignia.

The election of 1864 brought only two candidates into the political ring. The main split during this election year was within Lincoln's own party when General John C. Fremont (6) was nominated for president by the Radical Republicans who felt Lincoln too moderate in the handling of war problems. Fremont withdrew in the autumn in favor of Lincoln. With the Republicans again nominating Lincoln, the Democrats chose Gen. George B. McClellan (7 & 8). This election

again produced the ferrotypes along with at least fifty Lincoln medals and twenty McClellan medals. Some of the more interesting Lincoln pieces contained slogans such as the following: "If I am Re-elected President Slavery Must Be Abolished With The Reunion of States," "Freedom To All Men—Union," "The Union Must and Shall Be Preserved," "Free Homes For Free Men," "Good For Another Heat," "Abraham Lincoln An Honest Man The Crisis Demands His Re-Election in 1864," and "Lincoln And Union." Upon the death of Lincoln

many medals were issued and brass badges (9) were worn at the time of his funeral.

My collection of political campaign items is arranged chronologically according to election in the manner of the illustrated Lincoln frame. These items start with the Washington inaugural buttons of 1789 and include the latest in "I Like Ike" celluloid buttons. This hobby, while presenting the romance of American history and the lure of things curious and somewhat rare, also presents a recreational benefit of relaxation which



Brown Collection.

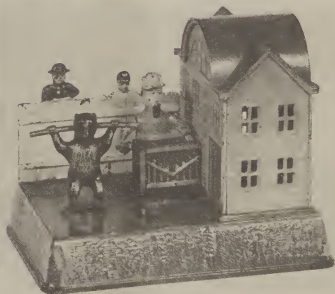


# Mechanical Electrical and Scientific Antiques

Conducted by F. H. GRIFFITH

## The Organ Grinder and Performing Bear Bank

By F. H. GRIFFITH



One of a very limited number of mechanical banks having spring wound motors is our choice as No. 61 in the numerical classification of the mechanical banks. Another unusual feature about this bank, The Organ Grinder And Performing Bear, is that the patent papers covering the bank apply to another mechanical bank totally different in appearance.

The Organ Grinder And Performing Bear was patented June 13, 1882 by L. Kyser and A. C. Rex, and of course, Kyser & Rex Company of Philadelphia, Pa., made the bank. This patent as issued actually applies to the Organ Bank With Cat And Dog Or Boy And Girl. However, the same principle of operation in turning the figures is employed in the Organ Bank and the bank under discussion and this is the feature protected by the patent. In the case of the Organ Bank the operation is accomplished by turning a crank by hand, while a spring motor provides the power to operate the Organ Grinder And Performing Bear. While on this subject it might be well to mention that there is a third type of Organ Bank operating on the same principle. This is the miniature Organ Bank with a revolving monkey. A fourth type

has a monkey that tips his hat, but no turning figures are present. These four types of Organ Banks were all manufactured by Kyser & Rex.

The bank pictured was obtained by the writer some years ago from an antique dealer in Bath, Me. It is an unusually fine specimen and completely original. The bank is painted in bright colors and these are in excellent condition. The base is entirely green with highlightings of red and yellow around the sides, the building is tan with a red roof and door, and the windows are outlined in gold. The back fence is white and one boy has a blue jacket and the other a yellow shirt. The figure playing the organ has a red jacket, grey trousers, yellow hat, and he has natural features with a black beard. The organ is brown and gold, and the figure of the bear is also brown with bronze highlighting. The stick over the bear's shoulders is gold, as is the winding key.

A feature that makes the Organ Grinder And Performing Bear unusually desirable is the sustained action of the bank. A permanent key located on the side of the building is first wound to prepare the bank for operation.

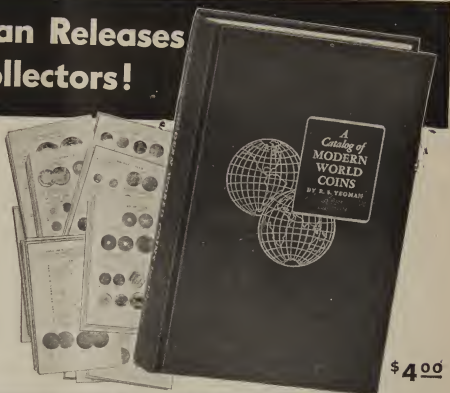
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# Numismatics

## Commemorative Coin History

By CHARLES FRENCH

As a means of promoting interest in the Chicago World's Fair in 1892, the World's Fair or Columbian Commemorative half dollar was authorized to be struck by the United States Mint, and then, to be sold at a premium at the Fair. As a publicity stunt, the "first" coins coined were "pedigreed" by being kept separate from the others, and documents of authenticity accompanied, I believe, the first five pieces. A great deal of publicity about the coin was used throughout the country, and it was announced that \$10,000 had been paid for the No. 1 coin by a wealthy man. This did not mean that the No. 1 truly was worth \$10,000, but it conveyed the impression throughout the land that these attractive Columbian halves were something to buy and would be worth a good premium some day. I would not be surprised if everyone who attended the fair, and there were thousands, purchased one of these coins, either of 1892 or 1893 and put them away among their keepsakes. This is clearly evident today, for in nearly every non-collector's small accumulation of coins, there usually is at least one Columbian half dollar, and for the most part in tarnished but uncirculated condition.

Many of these were used as pocket pieces and, of course, these are found in varying degrees of wear.

During the second year of the Fair, the success of the halves encouraged the issue of the Isabella quarter by the Board of Lady Governors originally designed to be a companion piece with the Columbian halves, the issue, however, was very small and consequently of much greater value.

Our second series of silver commemoratives came out as a silver dollar for the long series of half dollars to be used as commemoratives had not as yet become established, and would not until 1918. The well known designer, C. E. Barber, designed the coin in commemoration of the statue that was erected in Paris by the American people, a replica of which appears upon the reverse of the coin. While these only sold at \$2.00 each by the Lafayette Memorial commission, there were not as yet sufficient collectors and public interest was not as yet lively enough in commemorative coins to insure the success of the original distribution of these dollars. Many of them found their way into the hands of dealers in quantities, to lay many years in vaults until the demand increased.

At one time, I saw a bag of 250 of these dollars in just such a place,

twenty years after their issue.

The success of the Columbian halves at the World's Fair Exposition encouraged the striking of many commemorative coins for the Panama Pacific Exposition in 1915, but none of this series were accepted very favorably, while there were two and a half million Columbian halves coined, only twenty-seven odd thousand Panama Pacific halves were struck, and only 6749 gold \$2.50 pieces. While the authorization for the two varieties of fifty dollar slugs was for one thousand of each, and they were designed as remembrances of the gold rush days, throughout the entire exposition only 483 round ones were sold, and 645 octagonal ones. Most likely the popularity of the octagonal ones was due to their unusual shape. The balance of these beautiful but expensive pieces were melted up after the exposition. The initial cost of these coins is undoubtedly the reason for their unpopularity at the time. Collectors then, thought twice before investing over \$50 in one coin and I can remember as late as 1926 seeing a pair for these selling for as low as \$200 for the two! "Dogs," they were, because of their size and expense!

The Lincoln Centennial half dollar, first of the long series to come of this type, commemorated the admission of the state of Illinois into the Union. A truly beautiful coin, it was well distributed, particularly in the midwest, and 100,000 of these were sold.

The success of this commemorative must certainly have encouraged the Authorization of the Maine Centennial in 1920 of which 50,000 were sold. A considerable amount of interest was now growing for these new commemorative coins. The 1920 issue of Pilgrim halves struck a new high with sales of more than 150,000, even though the original issue was 300,000 and the balance were returned to the mint to be melted. In an effort to sell as many as possible, the Pilgrim halves were again reissued in 1921 with the same design but with the 1921 date added to it. Not nearly as many of these were sold as the 1920 issue.

In all cases of "varieties" such as the Missouri 2x4, Alabama 2x2, and Grant Star, the incused additions were struck first in very limited quantities to create an additional rarity, and a great many of these were offered at first to preferential people, the balance finding their way

into the hands of collectors.

In the early twenties, most of these commemorative half dollars could be purchased for from \$1. to \$1.50, and the varieties with the additions for from 50¢ to \$1. more.

For many years after 1921 there usually were one or two new commemoratives issued, and these helped keep interest alive in this interesting series. Supplies of them were plentiful so one could make a collection without having to pay high prices for them. In 1928 the Hawaiian Sesquicentennial, distributed from Hawaii, became the most expensive commemorative to be issued; \$2.00 was charged for these and a note with the application blank sent out through the mail explained that the investment was a good one, for only 10,000 of these coins were to be struck and they were bound to rise in value. I sometimes wonder if the distributors ever imagined how high they would go! For these catalog at \$145 each today, one of the rarest and highest priced commemorative half dollars.

The Oregon Trails, struck in 1926 were the first commemoratives to start a long series of repeat coinages and the issue was not finally ended until 1939. This practice (an attempt to sell more coins, create deliberate short issues and minor varieties) was copied by the Texas, Boone, Arkansas, Bocker T. Washington, and Washington Carver series. While this practice undoubtedly sold more coins, it was not looked on with favor by coin collectors, the public or the government, and is without doubt, one of the leading reasons why the authorization of more commemorative coins is banned.

There was a slowly but steadily increasing interest in commemorative coins from the beginning which grew until a peak was hit in 1936. During 1935 and 1936 speculators came into the commemorative field and prices skyrocketed, many varieties were coined, some of which were very short issues. People were scrambling for the new rarities. I can remember writing the distributor of the Boones after the announcement that a new pair of rare 1935/'34 D&S Boones were to be coined, only 2000 of each, to be sold by the pair at \$3.70. I anxiously sent my order in for 500 pair of the 2000! Shortly the order was cut to 100 pair, then 10 pair, and finally due to the over subscription, I was allowed to have ONE pair. I was lucky at that, for many collec-

(Continued on page 105)











MARCH

1958

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**SALUTING THE LOVABLE NELSON FAMILY**

Ozzie, Harriet, Dave, Rick

See Page 24

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## The Picture Gallery Bank

By F. H. GRIFFITH



A mechanical bank with a unique educational theme and a very appropriate name is our choice as No. 62 in the numerical classification of mechanical banks. This bank, the Picture Gallery Bank, is the only known mechanical bank that is actually instructive and could be used to teach not only the alphabet, but also how to count. In addition there is an object pictured to illustrate each letter of the alphabet and each object has the respective name shown. These names in all cases are short and thus could be used to teach a child to spell.

The Picture Gallery Bank was manufactured by the Shepard Hardware Company of Buffalo, N. Y., in the period of 1885. The actual designer and patentee is not known, however, it is very likely that C. G. Shepard and P. Adams were responsible. Both these men took out the patent covering the Punch & Judy Bank in July of 1884. The Picture Gallery is very similar to Punch

& Judy insofar as the operation of the figure is concerned and the general appearance and makeup of the back compartment section. It is not believed that J. & E. Stevens Company, after taking over the line of Shepard Hardware mechanical banks, ever made any of the Picture Gallery Banks. In most cases Stevens changed the castings in the base so that their conventional type of round coin trap could be used instead of the rectangular locking trap as used by Shepard. To the best of the writer's knowledge no Picture Gallery Banks have ever been found with other than the Shepard type of locking trap.

The bank shown is in fine original condition and was obtained by the writer some years ago in New England. The paint is in unusually good condition for this particular bank and is quite decorative. The round face of the bank is bright red with an outer edging in green. The lettering and decoration is painted gold. The section containing the numbers, alphabet, and so on is green and the numbers, the letters, and the objects are painted gold. The face of the man is painted in natural color and he has a blue coat, white shirt, and a red hat.

The levers to operate the bank are in the back. There are two levers, one to operate the figure and the other to operate the alphabet mechanism. To operate the saving feature a coin is placed in the outstretched hand of the figure. On pulling the proper lever the figure turns and lowers his hand depositing the coin in the provided slot. To operate the instructive mechanism the other lever is pressed and a letter of the alphabet appears in the left window. The number of this letter appears in the upper center window and an object with the name shown appears in the right hand window. In each case the name of the object begins with whatever letter of the alphabet is shown. As example, in the picture when the letter 'L' is shown the number is '12', and the word is 'lock' with a lock pictured. In this case the lock shown is the same as that used in the base of the bank itself. The instructive part of the bank has a mechanism that operates on a ratchet principle. This is independent of the savings mechanism and is so designed to enable the instructive feature to be used at any time without the necessity of a coin being deposited.

The Picture Gallery Bank is a very desirable mechanical bank with its completely different educational theme. It is a very showy large bank and difficult to find in good original condition with good paint.

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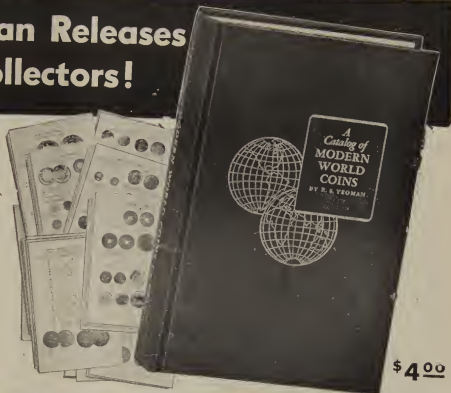
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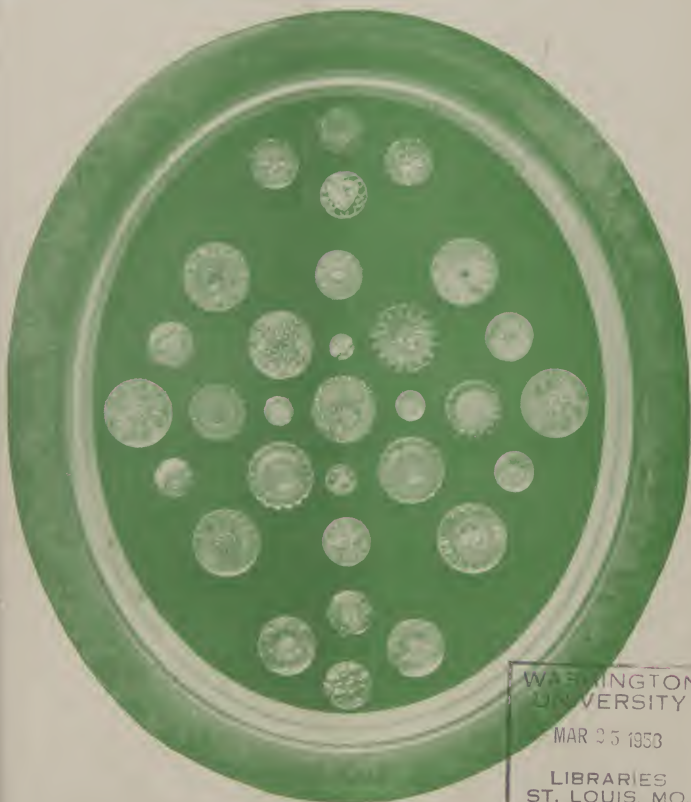


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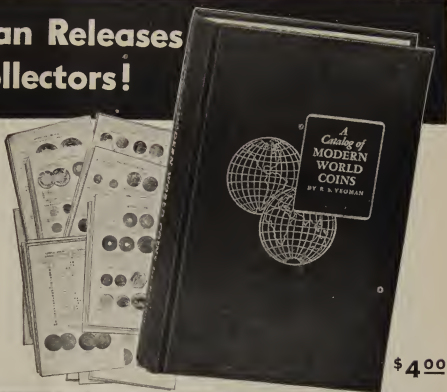
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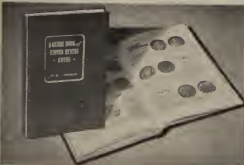


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# Hobbies

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# Mechanical Electrical and Scientific Antiques

Conducted by F. H. GRIFFITH

## The Bow-ery Bank

By F. H. GRIFFITH



As we reach No. 64 in our numerical classification of mechanical banks we are again confronted with a bank whose background is an unknown quantity. This bank, the Bow-ery Bank, has unfortunately no definite characteristics, markings, or identifiable clues that would lead to any particular designer or manufacturer of mechanical banks.

The bank shown is from the very fine collection of Mr. L. C. Hegarty and it was formerly in the extensive collection of the late Dr. Arthur E. Corby. Here again we draw a blank as to any information about the bank since it is not known where Dr. Corby obtained this specimen. There is one helpful piece of information that

establishes the approximate time of manufacture of this bank. In the Selchow & Richter Catalog of 1890 the bank is pictured and offered for sale at \$4 per dozen. To the best of the writer's knowledge this is the only piece of pertinent information known concerning the Bow-ery Bank.

The bank pictured is in fine original condition and the only defect of any kind is the piece broken and missing from the top. The base and name section are painted a dark green and the lettering of the name is gold. Other decorations of the front are in gold and the outlining around the name section and the decorations at the top are in red. The back or rear section of the bank has ribbed sides and symmetrical pattern perforations. This entire section is painted with a brown type of varnish. The round section above and between the two bank teller type window openings has a paper label thereon. Unfortunately whatever printing appeared on this label is now illegible. Possibly this consisted of instructions as to the operation of the bank.

The operation is quite simple but effective. A coin is inserted in the provided slot on the ledge of the window shown on the right in the picture. In dropping into the bank the weight of the coin causes both dogs to bow toward each other. The dogs then return to the position shown in the picture.

The mechanism inside the bank is made of wood. This consists of a wooden slide which is caused to move or pivot by the weight of the coin. The paper dog in the right window is fastened to one end of this wooden slide. A small movable block of wood with the paper dog fastened thereon is located in back of the other window. This small block is fastened by a wire to the movable wood slide in the right window. This mechanism causes the dogs to bow when contacted by the weight of a coin.

The pictures of the dogs are of interest. They are printed paper in black and white. The dog in the right window has a monocle in his eye and is of the 'dude' type. The other dog is a rough character type with his eyes squinted and his mouth twisted. Some kind of name or lettering appears over each dog in the curved section of each window. Unfortunately in both cases this lettering is not legible.

The Bow-ery Bank is most certainly a rare item to have in a collection since the specimen under discussion is the only one known to exist. This point in itself certainly recommends it as a desirable item to the mechanical bank collector.

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1958

# Hobbies

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MINIATURE BOOKS

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# Mechanical Electrical and Scientific Antiques

Conducted by F. H. GRIFFITH

## Goat, Frog and Old Man Bank

By F. H. GRIFFITH

A mechanical bank with the unusual feature of having a companion mechanical bank is our choice as No. 65 in the numerical classification of mechanical banks. This bank, the Goat, Frog And Old Man is a companion piece to the Initiating Bank First Degree. The Goat, Frog And Old Man was originally advertised in old catalogs as the Initiating Bank Second Degree, however, since this name does not appear on the bank it has been felt by present day collectors that the present name is more descriptive and offers more accurate identification.

The Initiating Bank First Degree and Goat, Frog And Old Man are both covered by the same patent. This was issued September 23, 1880 to George W. Eddy of Plainville, Conn. This patent was also assigned to Andrew Turnbull and James A. Swan-

ston, both of New Britain, Conn. They operated under the firm name of The Mechanical Novelty Works and made the Goat, Frog And Old Man as well as a number of other mechanical banks. This concern, of course, also made the Initiating Bank First Degree. The article and information on this mechanical bank appeared in the November, 1952, HOBBIES.

The Goat, Frog And Old Man, like its companion bank, is typical of the times when secret societies and fraternal organizations used a goat in their initiation ceremonies. Both banks employed the use of the same goat with modifications in the original pattern to include the old man astride the goat. The frog is identical on both banks and a similar type mechanism is employed to operate the two banks.

The bank shown was obtained by

the writer some years ago in an antique shop in Providence, R. I. It is in excellent condition, completely original, and with good paint. The frog has a green head with an under jaw in yellow and white. The mouth is red and the eyes are a copper bronze color. The figure of the old man is entirely painted the same copper bronze color as the eyes on the frog. The base of the bank, the frog, and the goat are all painted in a dark brown varnish type of finish. There is a gold line around the top and bottom edges of the base to add a finishing touch. While not particularly colorful or lively the painting of the bank is attractive and interesting.

The bank operates as follows: A coin is placed as shown on the tray-like container held in the hands of the old man. The lever located in front of the goat is then pressed and the



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AUGUST

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TOY KITCHEN OF 1867

(See page 41)









# Mechanical Electrical and Scientific Antiques

Conducted by F. H. GRIFFITH

## Little Moe Bank

By F. H. GRIFFITH

A mechanical bank with a definite flair of politeness is our choice as No. 66 in the numerical classification of the mechanical banks. This bank, Little Moe, actually tips his hat in the process of receiving a coin. It is one of the bust group of mechanical banks and is one of the most attractive banks in this group.

Little Moe is of English origin having been manufactured by Chamberlin & Hill Ltd. of Walsall, England. Here again it is well to point out that the English were outstanding in the production of the bust type of mechanical bank. They excelled in this phase and produced a greater variety of bust types than were made in our country. This is the only group of which this can be said, however, as mechanical banks in the overall picture are distinctly Americana, and English and other foreign types are only a small percentage of the total. In addition to Little Moe, Chamberlin & Hill also produced the Clown Money Box which is also a bust type and about the size of Little Moe. The Clown is appropriately painted an overall white with other decorations in yellow and either red or blue. He has a peaked hat tilted to the side and is somewhat similar in general appearance to our Humpty Dumpty Bank. Chamberlin & Hill also made other banks and a general line of cast iron novelties, such as hat and coat hooks, trivets, sadiron stands, ink stands, paper weights, letter plates, and household hardware.

The Little Moe shown in the picture turned up in England several years ago and another specimen was found in one of our New England States some time ago. This brings to mind the fact that very few English banks turn up in our country. Transversely, mechanical banks of United States manufacture are not uncommon in Eng-

land. It is known that quite a few of our banks were exported to England and apparently the opposite is true of the English banks imported into this Country. Of course another factor that has direct bearing on this situation is the vast quantity of mechanical banks made in this country as compared to the limited quantity made in England.

The bank shown is in fine original condition with no repairs. The paint is quite good and the colors are as follows: The coat is red with a white collar and blue tie and buttons. He has brown eyes, red lips, white teeth and his raised left hand holds a yellow hat. The name "Little Moe Bank" is on the back of the bank and the registration number is shown below the name.

To operate the bank a coin is placed in the extended right hand, then a lever located at the rear left shoulder is depressed. As the lever is pressed the right hand raises to the mouth, the tongue recedes, and the coin drops into the mouth. As this action is taking place the left arm moves forward tipping the hat in the polite gesture of thanking the operator for the coin. The eyes also roll back during the operation. Upon releasing the lever the various parts of the figure automatically return to the position shown in the picture. As a point of interest it might be well to explain that the hat is directly fastened to the working mechanism and tilts forward of its own accord. The left arm movement is therefore actually caused by the hat, however, to all appearances the opposite effect is given.

Little Moe is a very desirable, attractive bank and so far there are three specimens known to exist in private collections.



















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